ISSN 0703-8763

ALBERTA/EDMONTON SERIES REPORT #71

FEMINISM AND RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOUR: Greeley Revisited in Western Canada

by

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The Alberta Survey (formerly All Alberta Study) includes the Edmonton Area Study and is administered and supported by the Population Research Laboratory and the Department of Sociology at the University of Alberta. Additional financial support for data collection was provided by the Clifford E. Lee Foundation. Frank Grigel served diligently as my research assistant. Revised version of a paper presented to the Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association, May 1990.

OCTOBER 1990

92-04422/

INTRODUCTION

The years since World War II have seen major social and demographic changes in family life, including declining marriage and birth rates, rising divorce rates, an increase in cohabitation as well as an increase in female labor force participation, with many women combining such employment with traditional family roles. Shifts in gender role attitudes have accompanied these socio-demographic changes (Thornton, et al., 1983). As part of the feminist movement women have been calling for full equality in the various social institutions, including the churches, challenging their traditional patriarchal structures.

A traditional perspective on gender relations and the status of women appears to be deeply rooted in Western religions (Brinkerhoff and MacKie, 1985). Religion has traditionally legitimated patriarchal structures in society at large (Briggs, 1987), as well as within religious institutions (Ruether, 1985). Roberts (1984) has noted some of the historical examples of sex bias in Christian theology and how sexual differences have been viewed as creations of God and sexual inequality as divinely ordained, thereby reinforcing sex role distinctions. From earliest times, the Christian church has regarded women as inferior and a source of temptation, and has excluded them from positions of leadership and power (Fiorenza, 1985;

Ruether, 1974; Tavard, 1973). There are abundant historical as well as contemporary examples of sexism in Christian theology, liturgical practice and institutional structures (McGuire, 1981; Brinkerhoff and MacKie, 1985).

The women's movement and feminist ideology have challenged this religious legitimation of patriarchal structures in society generally, as well as specifically within the churches (Briggs, 1987). Few would argue with the view that feminism has already had a significant impact on theological reflection and scholarship, as well as on church practice and organization, however incomplete such effects may be. Hargrove et al. (1985) claim there is considerable ferment in American religious institutions at present concerning the role of women, with the women's movement facilitating the rise of women into leadership roles in the churches and calling into question traditional assumptions regarding the domestic role of women that has historically been legitimated by religious institutions. While women began to press for ordination in mainline Protestant denominations from the 1880s on, it is only in the 1970s that Lutheran and Episcopalian churches voted to ordain women, though even then with considerable dissent (Hargrove et al., 1985). The number of women enrolled as students in seminaries and theological schools has increased dramatically and by 1974, 104 of the 295 churches in the Ecumenical Church Council were ordaining women

(Lachelle, 1985). But while by the 1980s churches in Canada that refused to ordain women were still in the majority, where women are ordained to the full ministry their numbers are rising. In the United Church of Canada in 1989, 15.4% of its ministers were women, and women comprised over half the students studying for the United Church ministry (Hale, 1990). The Rev. Lois Wilson was appointed the first female Moderator of the United Church of Canada in 1980 and the first female bishop was recently consecrated in the United States, while the World Council of Churches has endorsed an Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women in Church and Society beginning in 1988.

Iadarola (1985) has documented how since the late 1960s a renewed feminist movement impacted on the Catholic Church, with an official statement against sex discrimination issued in 1978, pastoral letters by various U.S. bishops, the emergence of the Women's Ordination Conference in 1975, the establishment of the U.S. Bishops' Committee on Women in Society and in the Church, and the controversial 1983 decision by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops to write a pastoral letter on women in church and society. Wallace (1988) recently identified the women's movement as an important source of a number of notable changes in the thinking and experiences of Roman Catholic women over the past twenty years. These changes

include a more active participation in parish life in roles previously denied them (lector, distributing communion), appointment to official diocesan positions (chancellor, marriage tribunal), scholarly activity as theologians and canon lawyers, as well as a willingness to take positions in opposition to the hierarchy on issues such as birth control and the ordination of women. While patriarchal constraints continue to limit women's empowerment in the Roman Catholic Church, Wallace (1988) claimed that the women's movement raised consciousness regarding the second class rank of women in the Catholic Church. In Canada, as early as 1971 the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) was in dialogue with women concerning the question of ministries for women in the church (Hayes, 1985) and at the 1971 Synod of Bishops recommended that a mixed commission of men and women, religious and lay people be established to study the question of ministries for women in the Church. In 1982 the Canadian Bishops established an Ad Hoc Committee on the Role of Women in the Church and in 1984 adopted twelve recommendations and issued a kit of discussion papers on the role of women in the Church. This resulted in a backlash by the traditionalist group Women for Life, Faith and Family who issued an alternative kit in an attempt to counter what they considered the radical feminist influence on the CCCB (Shanahan, 1986). At the 1983 Synod of Bishops on Male-Female Reconciliation in the Church, the Archbishop of Quebec called for a recognition

of the ravages of sexism in the Church; more recently, the Quebec bishops issued a statement on violence against women which acknowledged the past role of the Church in perpetuating such violence.

However, this impact of feminism on religion has not occurred without conflict and there is continuing controversy in many churches over such issues as the use of inclusive language in hymns, prayers and scriptural readings and the ordination of women. Hargrave (1989) has noted how in many churches subtle or even overt conflict has arisen among women representing two styles of participation in church life: the traditional church volunteer whose primary occupation was that of homemaker and the woman employed outside the home who in many cases has the experience and skill to occupy leadership roles in the congregation traditionally filled by men. She also claimed that the more evangelical denominations have experienced a renewed emphasis on what they define as traditional family roles and they assert biblical bases for male headship and a subservient, domestic role for women. The fundamentalist strains in various religions have been in the forefront of opposition to the feminist agenda (Carmody, 1982). Various traditionalist groups, such as Women for Life, Faith and Family, have appeared in the Catholic Church, and many American Catholics have opposed the women's movement as a threat to women's "natural"

position in the home (Iadarola, 1985). In fact, Ruether (1985:2) has argued that for conservative, evangelical Christians, "feminism is a creature of modern apostasy from God and traditional social order. Thus their crusade to restore traditional Christian society often focuses on negating women's liberation and restoring women to their traditional place in the patriarchal family."

So while the combination of feminism and religion is viewed as a contradiction by many, religious feminists have discussed the personal struggles involved in the attempt to unify them (Carmody, 1982; Christ, 1980). Frustration and anger resulting from discriminatory behavior and sexist attitudes in the church continue to be experienced by many women (Wallace, 1988), leading them to question their involvement in and commitment to the church. Ruether (1983) has commented that it is precisely when feminists discover the congruence between the Gospel and liberation from sexism that they also experience their greatest alienation from existing churches. Since these churches, by their language, institutional structures, and social commitments, continue to ratify the opposite message, Ruether concluded that the more one becomes a feminist the more difficult it becomes to go to church.

PRIOR RESEARCH

In spite of such evidence of controversy and change, and of predictions that the issue of the role of women in the church will become increasingly salient (McNamara, 1985), there has been little in the way of empirical sociological research into these issues. Brinkerhoff and MacKie (1985) have stated that empirical documentation linking religion and gender roles is scarce, with much of it descriptive, somewhat polemical, and impressionistic.

Some research has suggested an association between religious affiliation, beliefs and practice, on the one hand, and attitudes toward appropriate roles for women (Thornton et al., 1983; Porter and Albert, 1977; Brinkerhoff and MacKie, 1985; McMurry, 1978). Approval of more traditional gender role attitudes is correlated with higher levels of religious involvement (Roberts, 1984). Brinkerhoff and MacKie's (1985) survey of American and Canadian university students demonstrated that higher religiosity was correlated with more traditional gender attitudes and that there were differences in such attitudes by current religious identification: Catholics were more egalitarian than mainline Protestants, followed by Fundamentalists and Mormons. Furthermore, religious factors were more strongly associated with gender attitudes than background variables. However, other studies have

found few Protestant-Catholic differences (Thornton et al., 1983; Mason and Bumpass, 1975). Thornton et al.'s (1983) analysis showed that youth, labor force experience and educational attainment contributed to the formation of egalitarian views of women's roles while church attendance and a fundamentalist Protestant religious identification tended to preserve more traditional attitudes. But their panel data suggested that prior sex role attitudes had no effect on later church attendance, though this may depend upon the specific content of the attitudinal questions.

There is some evidence that feminists are less likely than non-feminists to report religious belief or behavior (Weaver, 1985; Dempewolff, 1974; McClain, 1979). Himmelstein's (1986) review of various survey studies found that less frequent church attendance consistently and strongly distinguished pro-feminists from anti-feminists (anti ERA and abortion), but there was no systematic relationship between feminist attitudes and social position. In addition, opposition to the ordination of women has been linked to a conservative sex role ideology (Nason-Clark, 1987; Lehman, Jr., 1981).

The immediate stimulus for the present research was the work of Andrew Greeley in his book with Mary Durkin, Angry Catholic Women (1984). In his sociological contribution to their interdisciplinary collaboration, Greeley analyzed

data from two surveys--a 1979 study of young (18-30) Catholic adults and the 1982 NORC General Social Survey--in an attempt to identify the factors causing some Catholic women to withdraw from active participation in church services. He documented a significantly lower level of church attendance among feminist[1] women compared to their non-feminist counterparts (a seventeen percentage point difference among young Catholics and a fourteen percentage point difference in the General Social Survey). However, endorsement of this feminism was not associated with significantly lower church attendance by women members of most United States Protestant denominations, with the exception of Baptists.

Based on his general perspective that religious experience and imagination contribute to religious behavior or participation in an organized church, Greeley then attempted to explain why attitudes in opposition to more traditional gender role definitions might lead to lower levels of church attendance for some Catholic women. His analysis suggested that the difference in church attendance between young Catholic feminists and non-feminists resulted from a complex combination of level of education, mother's church attendance and employment history, and one's degree of closeness to God. Young college educated feminists whose mothers worked outside the home during the respondent's (Rs) pre-school years and went to church

regularly have learned from their mother's example, Greeley argued, that feminism and religion are compatible and hence see no conflict between their own feminism and church attendance. On the other hand, if the young college educated feminist's mother was traditional in <u>both</u> her church attendance and her exercise of the female role--i.e., regular church attendance and no employment when her daughter was a pre-schooler--then the daughter's feminism negatively affects her church attendance. These non-devout feminists have acquired incompatable images of church and of modern, feminist woman from their childhood experiences. But even this incompatibility between feminism and religion can be eliminated if these Rs feel close to God. So among college educated young Catholic women whose devout mothers did not work outside the home in the first six years of their life and who don't themselves feel close to God, the feminists are forty percentage points less likely to go to church regularly than are the non-feminists. To quote from Greeley, "....if you feel close to God, then the incompatibility of your present image of Woman with the image of Woman in your childhood and your image of Church seems to be eliminated. While you may 'blame' the Church for the image of Woman with which you were raised and which you now reject, that blame does not keep you away from church attendance because you still like God and you feel that God likes you (29)."[2]

PRESENT STUDY

The present research was designed to further examine Greeley's argument with data from a western Canadian province.[3] Our data were collected in 1988 so we will be able to assess whether the endorsement of feminist attitudes has changed in the years subsequent to Greeley's two surveys in 1979 and 1982, as well as examining the relation between feminist attitudes and church attendance. In addition, our western Canadian data are drawn from a general survey of the adult population and so we will be able to evaluate Greeley's argument with comparable data in a single sample. We will also widen the analysis to include certain denominational comparisons. Furthermore, we will report a more extensive analysis of feminist attitudes whereas Greeley simply combined several attitudinal items without reporting any reliability analysis; and he was forced to use different items in the two different studies, raising doubts concerning their comparability. He was also unable to test his complete model with the entire age range of Catholic women since there was no measure of mother's church attendance nor, apparently, closeness to God, in the General Social Survey. However, we will be able to control for age while testing the model. Finally, although Greeley apparently conducted some multiple regression analyses, these are not presented in the conventional manner and he relied

primarily on tabular analysis. So in addition to some tabular analysis, we will present a more complete multiple regression.

Based on this review of Greeley's work, then, we expect to find significant differences in church attendance when comparing feminist and non-feminist women: feminist women should report lower church attendance. We would also expect an increase in the amount of support among women for feminism compared to Greeley's 1979 and 1982 results. However, the lower church attendance among feminists should be observed only among Roman Catholic women, not the mainline Protestant women.

In a multivariate analysis, we will examine the net effects of age, education, labour force status, mother's employment during R's pre-school years and mother's church attendance on the R's church attendance. While each of these variables is likely to show a zero-order relationship with church attendance, we are unsure of their predicted net effects. We will also explore the effects of feminist attitudes and the R's closeness to God on church attendance, net of the above background variables. These multivariate analyses will be reported separately for Roman Catholic and mainline Protestant women. Finally, following Greeley we will attempt to specify the effects of feminism (controlling for age) on church attendance by examining its

effects within categories of the several variables noted above.

SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTION

The data analyzed in this paper were collected in the winter of 1988 in the All Alberta Study conducted by the Population Research Laboratory of the University of Alberta. This random sample survey of households in the province of Alberta combines face-to-face interviewing of the sample in the city of Edmonton and telephone interviewing for the rest of the province. All the telephone questions were taken from the longer face-to-face instrument.

For the purpose of sampling, the province was delineated into three areas: the city of Edmonton, the city of Calgary, and the remainder of the province. In all three areas a two-state selection process was used: a random selection of households followed by a selection of the R within each household with interviewers instructed to obtain an equal number of adult (18 years of age or older) male and female Rs within their allotment of interviews.[4]

Trained, experienced interviewers conducted the face-to-face interviews after an introductory letter briefly describing the study and advising the residents of

the household to expect a visit had been sent to each selected address. Four callbacks were made before declaring an address as no contact. The telephone interviews were completed in four weeks with ten callback attempts. Upon making contact, the interviewer identified herself, verified the telephone number, and then asked the screening questions for selecting the R. Since the final sample obtained for each area is not proportional to the Alberta population it represents, a weighting procedure was used to combine the samples. When the age and marital status distributions of the sample were compared to the most current Statistics Canada census data, indexes of dissimilarity demonstrated that the sample adequately reflected the Alberta population.

MEASUREMENT

The dependent variable of church attendance was measured by asking the Rs how many times did they attend church in the last four weeks. The distribution of this variable is predictably skewed and so its natural logarithm was calculated and used in the correlation and regression analysis. Rs were asked to report their current religious preference and those indicating no preference or affiliation were excluded from the analysis. Those reporting Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian or United Church were considered mainline Protestant; there were too few Rs

among other denominations, except for Roman Catholic, for separate analysis. Rs were asked whether they were presently working full-time, part-time, going to school, keeping house or something else and, following Greeley, we dichotomized them into those working full-time or not. They were also asked their age, highest level of education completed, whether their mother worked outside the home when they were of pre-school age, and how often their mother attended religious services when they were growing up. Rs were also asked how close they feel to God most of the time, with response categories of extremely, somewhat, not very and not close at all.

The measures of the main predictor variable of feminism were adapted from Greeley's two surveys such that women were categorized as feminist if they disagreed that "most men are better suited emotionally for politics than are most women (68%)" and that "it would be better for a pre-school child's emotional development if the mother didn't work outside the home (25%)" and agreed that "it is important to allow women to become ordained ministers/priests (62%)" and approved of "a married woman working for pay outside the home if she has a husband capable of supporting her (66%) Both Greeley and I recognize that the feminism so measured is only a mild version of the Feminist ideology and therefore limited in its generalizability to that wider-ranging, more

ideologically developed and consistent position. But although these items may not capture a more militant version of Feminism, they do demonstrate a reasonable degree of variability in the attitudes of a general sample. Furthermore, combining the responses to each of these items results in only 13% of the women categorized as consistently feminist. The percentage of Roman Catholic feminists (18%) is slightly higher than the 12% feminists among mainline Protestants.

Unfortunately, Greeley doesn't provide any frequencies for the individual items in the General Social Survey; but for the two items asked of young Catholics, 47% of the women thought it was extremely or somewhat important to allow women to become priests and 56% disagreed strongly or somewhat that a preschool child is likely to suffer emotional damage if the mother works. The comparable figures for the Catholic women in our survey are 62% and 31%, demonstrating a rather sizeable difference. The age distribution of Rs may affect the distribution of feminist responses, along with the specific historical time period. For example, the number of women ordained as ministers and priests, and the ordination of the first female bishop has no doubt had some impact on public opinion in the years since the survey of young Catholics in 1979. The difference in attitude regarding possible emotional damage for a working mother's preschool child is more surprising

but may reflect sample differences in age, marital status, and so forth. Comparison of the three surveys--Greeley's two and ours--also suggests that the specific items and their number affects the percentage of Rs classified as feminist. But the variability in responses to the individual items also cautions against assuming the unidimensionality of these measures of feminism. Welch (1975) found several distinct dimensions of women's issues, with support for one only slightly correlated with support for the others. Similarly, feminism may involve several dimensions of meaning to Rs and therefore have varying consequences on their behavior.

When these four items were subject to a reliability analysis as a preliminary step to possibly combining them into an index, their alpha value was only .538, suggesting that they can't be reliably combined. This conclusion was ratified by an examination of their intercorrelations, the average of which was only .222 with no pair higher than .344. These results suggest that Greeley's conclusions are limited by his failure to report any analysis of his feminism scale.

DATA ANALYSIS

However, in order to provide some results as comparable as possible to Greeley's, we also categorized Rs as

feminists on the basis of their responses to all four items combined and compared them with the remaining non-feminist women in terms of church attendance and found no significant difference in the percentage reporting regular attendance. Catholic feminists also did not differ significantly in regular attendance from Catholic non-feminists. Similarly, mainline Protestant feminists did not report significantly less regular church attendance compared to their non-feminist coreligionists. So these results based on a fairly restrictive definition of feminism--support on all four items--fail to replicate Greeley and are counter to our expectations. Interestingly, however, feminists are significantly less likely to attend church on a weekly basis (9%) compared to non-feminists (20%). The percentage difference in weekly attendance between Catholic feminists and non-feminists is of approximately the same magnitude (16% vrs. 26%) but isn't statistically significant, probably due to the smaller N (31 of 126 Catholic women attend at least weekly). There is no significant difference among the mainline Protestants but there are only 26 of a total of 255 who attend church on a weekly basis. Conclusions, then, about the relationship between feminism and church attendance appear to be quite dependent upon the specific measures of each.[5]

Since church attendance was measured as an interval scale, there are some obvious advantages to the use of correlation/regression, particularly in the context of the multivariate analysis we wish to pursue. Given the low reliability of the four item feminism scale, a single indicator of feminism--support for the ordination of women--was selected for use in this analysis. This item was selected because of its face validity and relevance to the topic of this research. The question of female ordination is one of the most important, but divisive, issues facing the churches (Jelen, 1989); and sexist attitudes are an important source of opposition to female clergy (Lehman, 1985; Jelen, 1989). Furthermore, this issue has great symbolic significance as a test of the churches' commitment to justice.

Table 1 presents the zero-order correlations between the log of church attendance and each of the predictor variables, with separate panels for women of all religious denominations, Roman Catholics, and mainline Protestants. None of these correlations among women of all denominations, though statistically significant, could be called strong. Closeness to God is moderately correlated with church attendance, with those expressing the greatest closeness attending more frequently. Similarly, those Rs whose mothers attended church more frequently are more frequent attenders themselves. As expected, there is a

TABLE 1. CORRELATES OF CHURCH ATTENDANCE

	CHURCH ATTENDANCE (LOG)		
	ALL DENOMINATIONS	ROMAN CATHOLICS	MAINLINE PROTESTANTS
EMPLOYMENT STATUS	.111 ***(550)[1]	.024(126)	.160 **(259)
MOTHER WORKED	.074 *(545)	.092(126)	.073(256)
MOTHER'S CHURCH ATTENDANCE	.212 ***(535)	.257 **(126)	.158 **(253)
EDUCATION	.077 *(550)	.154 *(126)	.077(259)
AGE	.180 ***(546)	.232 **(125)	.247 ***(257)
CLOSENESS TO GOD	.361 ***(544)	.308 ***(124)	.324 ***(256)
WOMEN'S ORDINATION	-.201 ***(530)	-.109(121)	-.080(252)

*** P < .001
** P < .01
* P < .05

[1] Sample sizes appear in parentheses.

moderately strong negative correlation between support for women's ordination and church attendance. Older women attend more frequently as do those not employed full time; women with more education and those whose mothers did not work when they were of preschool age are only slightly more frequent church attenders. Inspection of the two specific denominational panels indicates that all these correlations are in the same direction as for all denominations combined; however, there are a few differences in magnitude. Employment status is unrelated to church attendance among Catholics; but mother's attendance and Rs'level of education are both somewhat more strongly correlated with church attendance for Catholic women. However, for both of these denominational categories support for women's ordination is not significantly related to church attendance, although in each case the relationship is negative.

With the log of church attendance as the dependent variable, ordinary least squares regressions was used to compute path coefficients for successive reduced form equations which were then decomposed into direct and indirect effects. Coefficients were derived initially for the equation containing only the five exogenous background variables and then subsequently for the equation adding the two attitudinal variables of closeness to God and support for women's ordination. Table 2 presents the results of

these regressions for women of all denominations. All of the predictors, with one exception, have significant effects in the expected direction and explain a moderate amount (22%) of the variation in church attendance. The one exception is whether the mother of the R worked when she was a preschooler. Closeness to God has the strongest effect on increasing church attendance, followed by support for women's ordination which depresses church attendance net of these other predictors. More education also has a significant net effect but in the opposite direction: it leads to more frequent church attendance. Not being employed full time, mother's church attendance and age have smaller, net effects, with the latter two variables having notable indirect effects on church attendance via the two attitudinal variables (29% and 35%, respectively).

When this same regression procedure was used for the Catholic women a smaller but still significant (p .01) 18% of the variation in church attendance was accounted for. However, only closeness to God exhibited a significant net effect: those Catholic women who felt closer to God also attended church more frequently. But Table 3 shows that, though not statistically significant, the net direct effects of mother's attendance, education and age are of a similar magnitude to those reported above. So the major difference for Catholic women is that neither employment

TABLE 2. MULTIPLE REGRESSION OF CHURCH ATTENDANCE (LOG) ON PREDICTORS AMONG WOMEN OF ALL DENOMINATIONS

DEPENDENT VARIABLE	PREDICTOR VARIABLE	TOTAL EFFECT	INDIRECT EFFECT VIA ATTITUDES	DIRECT EFFECT
CHURCH ATTENDANCE (LOG)	EMPLOYMENT STATUS	.1291 **	.0086	.1205**
	MOTHER WORKED	.0270	-.0201	.0471
	MOTHER'S CHURCH ATTENDANCE	.1662***	.0480	.1182**
	EDUCATION	.1434**	-.0317	.1751***
	AGE	.1536***	.0535	.1001*
	CLOSENESS TO GOD	.2814***	----	.2814***
	WOMEN'S ORDINATION	-.2031***	----	-.2031***

	ANOVA	df	ss	ms	F	P
R^2 = .223	REGRESSION	7	57.568	8.224	20.375	<.001
S_e = .635	RESIDUAL	497	200.592	.404		

*** p < .001
** p < .01
* p < .05

status nor support for women's ordination has a net effect on church attendance.

Table 3 also contains these regression results for the mainline Protestants and again closeness to God has the largest net effect on their church attendance. However, in contrast to the Catholic women, support for women's ordination significantly depresses church attendance while other than full time employment significantly increases attendance, both net of other predictors. Also in contrast to the Catholics, mother's church attendance has no net effect.

It was noted above that Greeley was able to specify the relationship he observed between feminism and church attendance through the introduction of various controls. Our multiple regression results suggest that for women from all denominations combined, as well as for mainline Protestant women, our single indicator of feminism maintained a significant net direct effect on church attendance with controls for several of Greeley's specification variables. Such was not the case for Catholic women, however. In order to further explore Greeley's model, pairs of multiple regression equations for the specification variables are presented in Table 4, each with the log of church attendance as the dependent variable and support for the ordination of women and age as

TABLE 3. MULTIPLE REGRESSION OF CHURCH ATTENDANCE (LOG) ON PREDICTORS AMONG CATHOLIC AND MAINLINE PROTESTANT WOMEN

DEPENDENT VARIABLE	PREDICTOR VARIABLE	TOTAL EFFECT		INDIRECT EFFECT VIA ATTITUDES		DIRECT EFFECT	
		RC	PROT	RC	PROT	RC	PROT
CHURCH ATTENDANCE (LOG)	EMPLOYMENT STATUS	.0138	.2074**	-.0301	-.0166	.0439	.2240***
	MOTHER WORKED	.0579	-.0211	-.0221	-.0118	.0800	-.0093
	MOTHER'S CHURCH ATTENDANCE	.1805	.0585	.0180	.0313	.1625	.0272
	EDUCATION	.1449	.1668*	-.0320	-.0579	.1769	.2247***
	AGE	.1712	.2196**	.0412	.0582	.1300	.1614*
	CLOSENESS TO GOD	.2399**	.2758***	----	----	.2399**	.2758***
	WOMEN'S ORDINATION	-.0728	-.1427*	----	----	-.0728	-.1427*

RC	ANOVA	df	ss	ms	F	p
R^2 = .183	REGRESSION	7	11.490	1.641	3.578	<.01
S_e = .677	RESIDUAL	112	51.178	.459		

PROT	ANOVA	df	ss	ms	F	p
R^2 = .218	REGRESSION	7	19.366	2.767	9.127	<.001
S_e = .551	RESIDUAL	230	69.668	.303		

*** p < .001
** p < .01
* p < .05

TABLE 4. EFFECTS OF FEMINISM (CONTROLLING ON AGE) ON CHURCH ATTENDANCE (LOG) UNDER DIFFERENT CONDITIONS FOR WOMEN OF ALL DENOMINATIONS

SPECIFICATION VARIABLE	b	SE	r	R^{2a}	N
EMPLOYMENT STATUS:					
Full time	-.022	.025	-.062	.017	189
Not full time	-.084*	.018	-.251	.084	337
MOTHER WORKED:					
Yes	-.031	.034	-.122	.034	109
No	-.076	.017	-.223	.076	413
MOTHER'S CHURCH ATTENDANCE:					
< Weekly	-.066	.021	-.205	.082	239
Weekly	-.071	.021	-.208	.062	274
EDUCATION:					
< University	-.062	.016	-.195	.075	409
Some university or >	-.109	.036	-.275	.086	117
CLOSENESS TO GOD:					
Close	-.084	.017	-.243	.073	430
Not close	.029**	.024	.137	.115	90

a In each equation, age is included as the second independent variable, although its coefficient is not shown. Hence r represents the zero-order correlation between support for women's ordination and church attendance (log), while R^2 is the squared multiple correlation coefficient for an equation containing both support for women's ordination and age.

* Difference between slopes is statistically significant ($p<.05$) in a one-tailed test.

** Difference between slopes is statistically significant ($p<.01$) in a one-tailed test.

predictor variables. Comparison of unstandardized regression coefficients (slopes) for church attendance within each pair of equations is the appropriate way to explore these specification effects. For women from all religious denominations combined only two of these comparisons are statistically significant. But contrary to Greeley, support for women's ordination is negatively related to church attendance, net of age, for those who feel close to God while this relationship is positive for those women who do not feel close to God. Also contrary to Greeley's results for young Catholics, the negative relationship between support for women's ordination and church attendance, net of age, is stronger among college educated women. None of the differences in slopes for these same specification variables was significant among the Catholic women. For the mainline Protestants closeness to God specified the relation between support for women's ordination and church attendance, net of age, but again in the direction opposite to Greeley's argument. So there is no evidence in this specification analysis to support Greeley.[6]

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This research began as an attempt to at least partially replicate Greeley's research on feminism and church attendance. In general, however, we found little in our

data to support his conclusions. While we did find some evidence that feminism is negatively related to church attendance as he claimed, this relationship appears to depend to a large extent on the specific measures of both feminism and church attendance. When we used percent regular attendance--Greeley's main indicator--we failed to find any relationship between feminism and church attendance. Roman Catholic women did not appear less feminist in their attitudes than mainline Protestant women; if anything, the Catholics were slightly more feminist. There was also little evidence that feminism was more related to lower church attendance among the Roman Catholics.

Furthermore, our analysis of four feminism items drawn from Greeley's surveys cast doubt upon his procedure of combining them into an overall index. The four items were not highly correlated and when combined did not give evidence of sufficiently high reliability. Admittedly, the four items were drawn two each from Greeley's two surveys so our combined measure of feminism did not exactly replicate either of his two indices. However, at the very least our item analysis suggests some caution with respect to his conclusions concerning the relationship between feminism and church attendance. Evidence concerning the level of support for feminism among women from various religious denominations, trends in the amount of such

support, and conclusions concerning the relation between feminism and religious behaviour may depend to a significant extent on the particular measurement of feminist attitudes that is employed.

With the single indicator of support for women's ordination as the measure of feminism, we conducted a multivariate analysis of church attendance using predictor variables drawn from Greeley. We did observe a net negative effect of support for women's ordination overall and for mainline Protestants, but not for Catholics. But more crucially, we were unable to replicate Greeley's specifications of the feminism and church attendance relationship. Again, however, this failure to replicate must be qualified by differences in the specific measurement of feminism.

In addition to the measurement issue noted above, differences of place and time may also be relevant to an explanation of the differences between our results and Greeley's. Bibby (1987) has argued that in some religious aspects Canadians differ from Americans. While Canadian church attendance levels are somewhat lower, he argues that Canadians live in a society that values pluralism over competition and has a religious market dominated by Roman Catholics and denominations of British descent, not by conservative Protestants. These differing societal and

cultural contexts may have something to do with the different religous responses of Catholic feminists in the two studies. Perhaps feminism, at least in the prairie province of Alberta, is not as religiously divisive as in the United States. If Bibby is correct concerning Canadian pluralism, then perhaps it is not as necessary for Catholic feminists in (western) Canada to "prove" their feminist commitment through significantly reduced church attendance.

It is also possible that by 1988 support among women for the relatively mild measures of feminism used by Greeley and our replication may be sufficiently widespread so as to fail to differentiate between the religiously alienated and those who maintain at least regular church attendance. Some support for this suggestion may be found in the increased support for women's ordination in this research compared to Greeley's study of young Catholics. It is also likely that by now the more ideologically committed feminists may not express any religious preference, having withdrawn more completely over the years from any overt religious commitment.

In fact, there are probably several distinct processes at work in the religious adaptation of feminists. Feminism may lead some women to organize for structural change of the church while remaining an active participant within it;

some may cease active participation while remaining nominally connected; others may simply leave the church, severing any type of connection; while others may leave to form their own alternative church communities. So some feminists may be able to maintain both their identification with a particular church as well as regular attendance at its services; others may reduce or terminate their attendance while still maintaining an identification; another category may no longer be able to even maintain such a nominal identification after ceasing to attend while others may switch both their identification and attendance to an alternative church community. At present we know little concerning the factors influencing these different paths. Furthermore, a longitudinal research design will be required to adequately investigate the social processes involved in these different types of adaptation or reaction. Such a design would also be useful since it is likely that some reciprocal causation is present in the religion-gender roles relationship. For example, religion may operate as a conservative force promoting belief in traditional gender roles as part of a "natural" moral order. Under these circumstances high levels of religious participation might act to further reinforce traditional gender role attitudes which, in turn, help to maintain the high levels of involvement and participation. Of course, a more feminist orientation toward gender roles, perhaps acquired as a result of certain familial, educational or

work experiences, may lead to reduced levels of religious participation which, in its turn, reinforces or at least fails to inhibit a growing feminist commitment. These examples of possible reciprocal causation should be sufficient to illustrate the complexities that are likely involved and why longitudinal, panel studies will be required.

To further explore this question of feminism and religious behaviour in future research, increased attention to measurement issues is essential. Items tapping a greater range of feminist commitment are clearly required. There are several distinct dimensions of feminism and all need to be represented in such items. Furthermore, since the relationship between such a revised measure of feminism and church attendance may be non-linear (i.e., significantly lower attendance only above a fairly high level of feminist commitment), ordinary sample surveys of the usual size may not be sufficient for detecting and analyzing this relation. Hence future research should probably consider drawing more specialized samples in order to include sufficient numbers of the full range of committed feminists. In fact, more in depth interviews with small, select samples may be preferable to ordinary sample survey questionnaire\interview methods. The typical attitudinal measures used in such surveys as the present study are far removed from the "Women-Church" envisoned by

Ruether (1985:6) as the Christian expression of a "stage of feminist collectivization of women's experience and formation of critical culture", where women "begin to experience the gathering of liberated women as a redemptive community." In any event, more and improved research attention to this topic is clearly required.

ENDNOTES

1. For young Catholic women feminism was defined by agreeing that it is extremely or somewhat important to "allow women to become priests" and disagreeing strongly or somewhat that "a preschool child is likely to suffer emotional damage if the mother works"; while women in the General Social Survey were categorized as feminist if they disagreed that "most men are better suited for politics than are most women" and that "women should take care of running their homes and leave running the country up to men" and agreed that "it is alright for a married woman to earn money in business or industry if she has a husband capable of supporting her." Greeley acknowledged that these are moderate and limited measures of feminism and yet only 33% of the young Catholic women in 1979 endorsed both measures, while 57% of Catholic women in the 1982 General Social Survey could be called feminists.

2. In the General Social Survey college education didn't specify the relation between feminism and church attendance for Catholic women over thirty. But among the entire sample of Catholic women mother's employment had the same effect on the relation between feminism and church attendance as among the young women. Greeley also reported that it was among housewives who

were less than very satisfied with their family situation that feminism was related to significantly lower church attendance; feminism among women employed full time outside the home had no impact on their church attendance. However, there were no data on mother's church attendance nor, apparently, closeness to God, in the General Social Survey so the previous analyses could not be completely replicated.

3. The young Catholics survey in 1979 included Canada as well as the US and Greeley very briefly reported that the English Canadian young women were the most likely to be feminists compared to the Anglo Americans, French Canadians and Hispanic Americans; that they were also the category with the largest difference (twenty-seven percentage points) in church attendance between feminists and non-feminists; and that the same model used to explain the difference between feminists and non-feminists for American women also applied to young English Canadian women.

4. For the city of Edmonton the sampling frame consisted of a computerized list of addresses compiled by the City from their most current (1987) enumeration. A simple random sample of 620 addresses was selected for personal interviewing from the computer tape, with nursing homes, military and temporary residences

deleted from the sample. For the city of Calgary telephone numbers were randomly selected in two stages: from the three-digit prefixes an exchange was randomly selected and then a four-digit random number was selected and appended to the three-digit number of the exchange. Duplicate numbers were discarded and telephone numbers were checked against the most recent edition of the Calgary Numerical and Street Address Directory to eliminate businesses and numbers in non-existent telephone banks. Since no reverse directory was available for the remainder of the province to screen out the large number of non-working numbers generated, the three-digit prefixes were not used for selection. Rather, a computer file of five-digit banks of telephone numbers generated from Alberta Government Telephones' directories for these areas was used. This file represented 13% of the total telephone numbers in the sampling area at the time of the survey. The sample of telephone numbers for interviewing was generated by selecting with replacement a simple random sample of five-digit banks and appending a random two-digit number to each of them, with duplicates discarded. For further details, see Kinzel and Adebayo (1988).

5. Comparisons with Greeley are further complicated by the fact that while he used percent regular as his measure

of church attendance in the young Catholics survey, he reports results from the NORC survey using both percent weekly and percent regular.

6. Although Greeley included some higher order interactions in his analysis, such effects are unlikely in the present research in view of these first order results.

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